



# MONTEREY NEWS

APRIL 1998

VOLUME XXVIII · Number 4



## THE TOWN

**Ban on jet skis rejected by Massachusetts Environmental Police.** In a late-breaking story, Town Clerk Barbara Swann received notice on March 27 from Richard A. Murray, director of the Massachusetts Environmental Police, stating that Monterey's attempt to prohibit the operation of jet skis on Lakes Buel and Garfield has been rejected. The notice states, "A prohibition on the operation of personal watercraft does not appear to be warranted at this time." Murray also states that "...the general laws require that when a body of water is within two or more communities (Lake Buel) that all communities adopt the same regulations." Enclosed with the notice was a copy of the guidelines that towns are asked to follow when developing regulations regarding the use of watercraft.

Due to the lakes designation as "great ponds", the bylaw, which was approved by a majority vote at a Special Town Meeting on February 27, was required to be submitted for approval to the Massachusetts Environmental Police (an agency of the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement).

Local jet skiers such as Peter Chait who lives on Lake Garfield were pleased with the recent turn of events. Susan Bachelder, who has a home on Lake Buel, was not surprised by the outcome. "I'm glad that Fish and Wildlife have seen fit to encourage towns to regulate jet skis instead of an outright prohibition."



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*Camp canoes from the New England Keswick are stacked on the banks of Steadman Pond waiting for the return of the proverbial happy campers.*

**District Dispute Still Unresolved.** School Committee members will be appointed, not elected, this spring in the five member towns of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District, according to a ruling by Federal Judge Michael A. Ponsor of Springfield. If a permanent solution to the one-man, one-vote issue is not agreed upon by the five towns and Judge Ponsor, a trial could eventually decide the outcome. On February 26 Ponsor indicated that he might rule in favor of district-wide voting with residency requirements. Sheffield, which has opposed district-wide voting, agreed to another proposal previously submitted by Egremont to appoint School Committee members. These appointments could be made by the select boards of the mem-

ber towns or by school committees elected for the sole purpose of appointing committee representatives. This plan would bring the towns in compliance with federal law. Meanwhile, under this arrangement, the representation remains the same: Sheffield with four members, Egremont and New Marlborough each with two, and Alford and Monterey each having one. The controversy has come full circle as far as weighted voting is concerned. All the towns have expressed a preference for elected officials but also seem quite weary with the controversy and the legal expenses. The cur-

rent arrangement will serve for this spring and possibly for the future as well.

It is still not clear how the legal fees will be met. Monterey has said all along that it is not a participant in this dispute and, therefore, not liable for legal fees in connection with the Sheffield litigation. However, in a letter received by the Select Board from Charles Ferris, legal counsel for Egremont, he advised that there is no assurance that "your town would not be ordered to share in legal expenses simply because it did not participate in the lawsuit."

**One-Stop Dumping.** Solid Waste Committee members, Peter Vallianos, Wayne Burkhart, Joyce Scheffey, Bill Kopetchny, and Rudy Gero, appeared before the Board March 9 to present a



drawing for improvements to the town transfer station. The plan would provide facilities for one-stop dumping with a catwalk providing access to the various receptacles, and bulky waste disposal all year rather than at appointed times. There were no estimates given regarding the cost of the project.

Cheers and thanks to Judith Kales on the same evening for her twenty-fifth anniversary as clerk of the Monterey Select Board!

**Renovation Bids Opened.** March 2 the Select Board opened eight bids for renovations to the Town Hall. Plans for improving accommodations for town business and employees have been an issue for at least a hundred years. The previous meeting place was the second floor of the Monterey School house, but concern about the weight of the office causing the ceiling to fall on the kindergarten below brought headquarters to the present location. The current location is so cramped that several different meetings have to be held in the same room at the same time, and there is no adequate space for the storage of town records. This issue will not be on the Warrant in May, but could come up later in the year at a Special Town Meeting.

**Speaking of the Town Warrant.** The Democratic and Republican Caucuses have both unanimously approved Peter Brown to continue as Select Board member, likewise both approved newcomer George Emmons for the open position on the Finance Board. Though the Warrant has not been completed, there are three articles that may cause some discussion:

One of the articles will propose a Town Caucus for the purpose of choosing a slate for elected town offices, rather than the two caucuses held by the Republican and Democratic parties. Those in favor of this proposal think that it will encourage Independents to run for town office, those opposed to it argue that there would be more stress and divisiveness and the democratic process would be undermined.

Another petition seeks to separate the Select Board and the Board of Health, but would allow the same nominees to run for both offices if desired. The rationale for this petition is that more people would be inclined to run for Select Board. The current Select Board opposes the petition because they believe that the best interests of the town are served by the dual Boards since septic systems not in compliance with Title V are a potent health hazard for the town.

A third article calls for the creation of board, with an unlimited number of citizens, to determine what will be done with the Edith Wilson/Margaret McLaughlin property.

**Miscellany.** On March 23 Charles Cook, Senior Transportation Planner for the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), met with the Board to explain how Monterey might be eligible to participate in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Monterey could apply for funding to improve roads, particularly those which provide access to busy routes such as Tyringham Road.

Also on March 23 two bids were opened for the purchase of an above-ground split storage tank for the town garage. Miller's Petroleum Systems Inc. of Pittsfield was awarded their bid of \$21,000.66. Mr. Miller, president of the company, was present to answer questions.

— Jane Black & Maggie Leonard

**THE SELECT BOARD WILL NOT MEET ON MONDAY, APRIL 20, IN OBSERVANCE OF PATRIOTS DAY.**

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**NON-PARTISAN  
TOWN CAUCUS**

At the present time, Monterey nominates candidates for local offices by means of a political party caucus system. Members of each political party decide which candidates will represent their party in the town election. In response to a petition signed by several voters, a warrant article will appear on the ballot at the Annual Town Meeting on May 2, to change this to a non-partisan town caucus procedure.

A non-partisan town caucus is a meeting at which voters of the community nominate candidates who will appear on the local election ballot. Candidates do not use party labels. Any voter of the town may attend the caucus and vote. Two candidates (those who receive the highest numbers of votes by the caucus) may be nominated for each office and their names will appear on the town election ballot designated as "caucus nominee." Other candidates may run in the town election by filing nomination papers.

At least seven days before the caucus, notice must be posted conspicuously "in at least five places of public travel..., or shall be published at least twice in one or more local newspapers." The Select Board must sign the notice calling for the caucus, and the town clerk must call the caucus to order and preside until a chairman is chosen.

A significant number of the voters in Monterey are listed as Independents or Unenrolled. Under the current political party system they are unable to be part of the nomination process. Establishing a non-partisan town caucus for nominating candidates to local offices will allow for greater participation by all voters. In addition, the people who are nominated by the caucus will have non-partisan support with no constraints of political party association.

Sixty towns in Massachusetts currently hold non-partisan town caucuses. Only twenty three towns still use the political party system.

If you have any questions, feel free to call Greta Chernerff at 528-2949 or Fran Amidon at 528-1233.

**MEETING HOUSE  
RECEIVES GRANT**

The Massachusetts Historical Commission has announced a grant of \$100,000 in matching funds for the Monterey Meeting House restoration project.

The grant application, written late last fall, had the endorsement of the Monterey Historical Commission, chaired by Anne Marie Makuc. The Monterey Board of Selectmen, State Senator Andrea Nuciforo and State Representative Chris Hodgkins also wrote in support. The funds will help to offset costs of repairing the exterior of the building, including the foundation, drainage, rotted areas, the front entrance and stairs, and the belfry, and to construct a handicapped access ramp at the rear of the building.

A preservation restriction was granted to the Monterey Historical Commission in order to apply for the grant, and one will also be given to the Massachusetts Historical Commission as the grant has been approved. This allows the Historical Commission to have some oversight regarding the use of historically appropriate materials, equitable bidding procedures, and careful research to keep the new work within the guidelines specified by the Secretary of the (federal) Department of the Interior. All of this will improve the building's chances of being placed on the national Historic

Register and ensure historically appropriate restoration of the building while bringing it into compliance with modern codes.

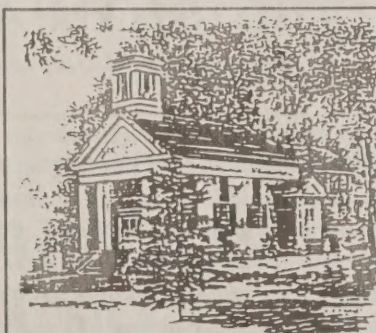
Fund raising efforts continue, however. "There's no point in restoring the building without raising enough money to support its continued maintenance," said Kathy Page Wasiuk, chair of the Meeting House Capital Campaign. "Endowing the building for the future is a high priority." She also pointed out that the matching funds may be used solely for the exterior of the building, and that the interior needs work as well, which must be funded from other sources. State money may not be used for the interior as the building serves, among other things, a religious purpose. "Even the Social Room, which was used for 130 years for town meetings, can't be painted using state money" she said. Architect David Bixby, of the firm of Clark and Green, has been working with the Building Committee and estimates the cost of exterior work at \$218,700.

— Kathy Page Wasiuk

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Who are these "outsiders"?

To the Editor:

I read with interest the cover story in the March *Monterey News* regarding the pending ban of jet skis on Lakes Buel and Garfield, and was disturbed to see the alleged problem characterized twice as the result of "outsiders" who infest our waters. Having not been in attendance at any of the meetings, I don't know the tone with which these arguments were presented, but I can't help wondering about the description of an "outsider," which was a term used in the report as though we should all know what was intended.

An avid fisherman in my spare time, I put my boat on both lakes with some frequency. And even though I don't particularly care to have jet skis buzzing around like flies when I go out to exercise my constitutional rights on a Saturday morning, now I have to worry if I am an "outsider" (which is how I feel every spring when the public ramp on Lake Garfield is closed down for the summer). Perhaps they just mean those unfortunate people who live down the road beyond the town's boundaries? Or worse, maybe they are branding their neighbors with

this title, those whose weekday contributions to society don't pay enough to afford lakefront property, or worse still, those awful people from the New Marlborough end of Lake Buel...?

The purposeful designation of "outsiders" is, on the one hand, something that children naively do when they traumatize each other with inclusion or exclusion from their secret little societies. On the other hand, it is also the basis for arguments used in support of genocide throughout history. In the last couple of years I have noticed a certain tendency in discussions of land or water usage in Monterey for the locals to "circle the wagons" against intrusions from the outside (reminding me of the original inhabitants of this land, those who we European "outsiders" chased from the beautiful Berkshire hills centuries ago). This tendency seems uncharacteristic of the otherwise open and welcoming spirit of Monterey.

Could someone explain to me what an "outsider" is, and how you propose we go about eradicating them from our/your experience?

Brian Snyder

Executive Director Gould Farm

### Say no to non-partisan caucus

To the Editor:

The warrant for the upcoming town meeting contains a proposal to eliminate town party caucuses as a method for nominating town officials.

At the present time there are two ways in which a citizen of Monterey who wishes to run for elective office in town can be placed on the town ballot. Anyone wishing to run can obtain nomination papers from the Town Clerk, and after obtaining a few signatures can have their name placed on the ballot for any office they wish to seek. In addition, Republican and the Democratic parties hold town caucuses to nominate people to run for town office.

The town caucuses generally occur after the Republican and Democratic party nominating committees have interviewed incumbents to determine whether or not they wish to seek re-election, identified and interviewed prospective applicants, and discussed their qualifications. After the nominating committees review their qualifications, the qualifications are reviewed again by members of the Republican and Democratic parties who choose to attend the caucuses.

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The Republican and Democratic parties frequently endorse candidates who are not affiliated with their own party, who are either independent or members of the opposite party. These caucuses and the nominating committee interviews which precede them offer a proven method for locating and encouraging qualified candidates to seek town offices. Many of these offices require intensive amounts of volunteer time, and it is not always easy to locate people willing to take on these jobs.

If the town caucus and nominating committee procedure is eliminated we will be left with a vacuum: no one is responsible for identifying, interviewing, encouraging and supporting potential candidates for town office.

Accordingly, just as the town voted on two separate occasions in prior years to defeat this proposal, on behalf of the Monterey Democrats I encourage town voters to reject the current warrant article at the May Town Meeting which will attempt to dismantle the town party caucuses.

Charles J. Ferris, Chair,  
Democratic Town Committee

## Meeting House ownership

To the Editor:

In the February issue of the *Monterey News* Keith Snow, pastor of the Monterey United Church of Christ, raises the question of ownership of the Monterey Meeting House. Should we consider secular ownership for this "historic and invaluable gathering place"?

This question arises out of concern for the physical condition of the building. Its present state of disrepair does not speak well of the church or, by extension, the town. The Capital Campaign is addressing that concern. While secular ownership of the Meeting House might lead to more donations, there are many other considerations.

First is the concern about what the church is doing for the community. The Monterey United Church of Christ has been a catalyst for many community projects, including the *Monterey News* and the Monterey Arts Council. Out of its spiritual concerns have come the spark and ability to address broader community needs. The church has been only too glad to be the catalyst, and then encourages the larger community to take over various projects. It seems to me that this is the role of the church, rather than doing

things for the community. Certainly the church might encourage even greater use of the building for community events.

It is difficult to know how a change in ownership would effect the community. Would secular auspices lead to use of the building as a more vital center for social and cultural events?

Another crucial consideration is how the loss of the building would effect the religious community. Would a house church better meet the spiritual needs of the members? Even if the answer is yes, would the church survive? Without the visibility and symbol of the church edifice, would members and prospective members tend to melt away into other congregations?

We need to examine what has happened to other churches that considered relinquishment of their buildings. For example, the New Marlboro United Church of Christ has relinquished one of its buildings and kept another for worship. The Interlaken United Church of Christ uses its building for summer concerts, and meets annually for business, but not for worship.

Thanks for opening up this discussion, Keith. Lets hope there are many more responses.

Jana Shepard, Member,  
Monterey United Church of Christ

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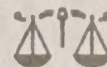


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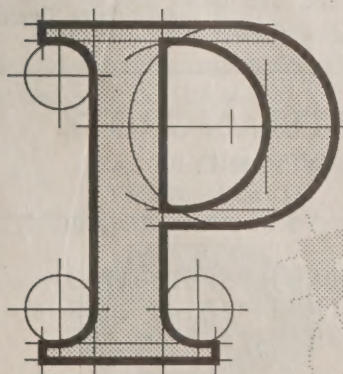
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A burro at Gould Farm with a three o'clock shadow.

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## VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK

The Memorial Park is almost completed. All three monuments, with Monterey veteran's names inscribed, will be in place for a dedication on Memorial Day. The three steles (monuments) will list names of Monterey veterans in all wars from the Revolution through the Vietnam War. Presently we have money to pay for all work done to date, however, we wish to do some landscaping, install a permanent light on the flag, and perhaps place a few benches in the area. We again ask for your donations. Even if you have already donated, we would appreciate further commitments from you to complete the additional work. Remember the memorial park will be here for many years to come and will honor Monterey veterans who served. No town money has been required for this project. You have made this happen because of your past generous donations. Please - one more time.

— Dean P. Amidon  
Veteran's Memorial Park Committee

## RABIES CLINIC RESCHEDULED

The Rabies Clinic that was scheduled for March 21 and cancelled due to snow, will be held on Saturday, April 18, from 1-2:30 p.m. at the Monterey Fire House. Marge Gulick from Bilmar Veterinary will be administering the vaccines. The shots are a real bargain at nine dollars each, and help protect both animals and people against rabies which have been a problem in southern Berkshire County.

— Barbara Swann

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— Page 53 (words recorded by Elihu Harmon of Monterey, age 21, in 1871)

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## FIREHOUSE DANCERS

Once you start dancing, it's hard to stop! That's what a number of Monterey's firefighters and friends found after the highly successful, sold-out 150th Anniversary Ball held in the Firehouse last August. So, the "Firehouse Dancers" was born. We are about thirty or forty townspeople and dancers, from as far away as Westfield and Austerlitz, New York, who meet the first Friday of each month to learn, practice, and just generally have fun. Informal instruction is often available from guest teachers Paula Kurman and Jim Bouton (Yankee baseball great and author). The duo are lovers of ballroom, swing, and Latin dancing, and offer beginners and intermediates lessons, followed by open dancing.

Now the group is planning its first celebration of dancing in Monterey, Swing Into Summer. We will be dancing to the strains of our own Arnie Hayes and his seven-piece Lazy River Band, with song stylist Nancyann. The event will be held Saturday, May 23, at 7:30-11:00 p.m. in the Firehouse. There will be light refreshments and a cash bar with proceeds to benefit the Monterey Fire Company Ltd. The cost is thirty dollars per couple and seating will be limited. The dress code is Berkshire festive (jackets and ties, no jeans) and a rollicking good time is expected for all. Space is very limited to assure plenty of room for dancing, so make your reservations now - don't be left out this year. For tickets send a check to the Firehouse Dancers, P.O. Box 706, Monterey 01245. For more information contact Ray Tryon and Del Martin (528-9480).

— Nancy Kalodner



## NEW MARLBOROUGH CENTRAL AND MONTEREY SCHOOL

The PTA is sponsoring two fund raisers this month. The Scholastic Book Fair is back after a brief absence. Children are provided an opportunity to purchase Newberry Honor and Winner books as well as old and new favorites. This year teachers have made a wish list of books they would like for their classroom. For every book purchased and donated to a classroom a bookplate will be inscribed with the name of its benefactor. It is a neat way of leaving behind a remembrance of your child's years at Monterey and New Marlborough Central.

The PTA is looking for your twocents, and maybe a whole lot more. The second annual Penny Drive is underway! Last year 22,500 pennies were brought to school. They were exchanged for the beautiful sign that is now at the entrance to NMC. This is a great way to get rid of those jars of pennies collecting dust around the house, and support a good cause. Those interested should call Maureen Haugh at NMC (229-8867) to coordinate a drop-off time.

— Debbie Mielke

## COUNCIL ON AGING

The Monterey Council on Aging will host a luncheon at noon on Friday, April 24, in the basement of the Town Hall.

Members of the Monterey Grange are cordially invited to attend.

— Pauline Nault



Suzanne Hoppenstedt trail blazing for the Land Trust on Mount Hunger.



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Trail blazers working on the Monterey Land Trust Mount Hunger property paused for a portrait during the Saturday, March 28, work party. They are, from left to right, Lew Scheffey, Joyce Scheffey, Jane Black, Storrs Olds, Suzanne Hoppenstedt, Alice Berke, Bob Carlson, and his son Jonah in front.

## DEADLINE FOR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Applications for the 1998 McLaughlin-Wilson Scholarship are now available at the Town Office. Preference is given to students as they are entering their first year of higher education after high school. However, applications are welcomed from any Monterey resident pursuing higher education. This may include vocational school, trade school, apprenticeship, college or graduate school.

The following requirements apply:

a) Residency in the Town of Monterey: In general, the student must have physically lived within Monterey during most of the last two years of high school. An exception would be made for boarding school students.

b) Merit is to be the primary criterion of any scholarship award, but need and other factors will also be considered.

Completed forms are to be submitted to the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation by April 30, 1998.

— Monterey Select Board



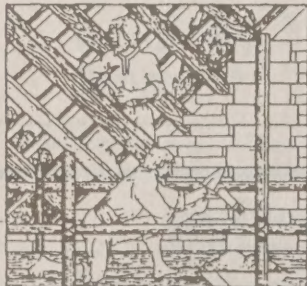
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## THE BIDWELL HOUSE

April brings great activity to the Bidwell House. As part of the buildings restoration project funded by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the museum will be hosting an archeological dig. The work will be done by archeologist Joyce Clemens from Oxford, Massachusetts, who was awarded the project as the result of a public bid.

The work will be centered around the farm shop/piggery, the only eighteenth-century farm out-building remaining on the property. This structure has been in danger of collapsing due to serious foundation problems. As part of the restoration project, the building will be jacked up and the foundation stones will be reset. In addition, drainage on the north side of the building will be improved by the installation of a gravel ditch. Because of this ground disturbance, the Historical Commission requires archeological test pits dug around the area to retrieve any artifacts which might be damaged as a result of the project.

As noted in the name farm shop/piggery, there is some confusion about the original use for this structure. It has been referred to as a piggery and this is supported by the fact that in front of the building is a stone-walled paddock area, which could have been a pen for animals. However the design of the building is not one associated with animal use. It has a narrow entrance and a stairway to a loft. Buildings for housing animals usually have wider doors, and lofts for hay storage generally have ladders. In addition there is no obvious evidence of animal use in the interior of the building. One important result of this dig could be the determination of the purpose of the building through the artifacts that are discovered. Unearthing artifacts before disturbing the ground will also save them from damage.

The Bidwell House dig will be open to the public on Saturday, April 11, from 10-10:45 a.m. Ms. Clemens will conduct a lecture and demon-

©MAGGIE LEONARD



*From the Bidwell House collection, a basket of ash splits made about 200 years ago by Native Americans from the Taconic region.*

stration of the archeology techniques she uses to plot the project, dig and retrieve artifacts, and record findings. This event will be fun and educational for the whole family, and admission charge for the program is only \$2 for adults and \$1 for children. A rain date is scheduled for April 18. Call 528-6888 for information.

The entire archeological operation will be documented with slides for a presentation in October as part of the statewide Archeology Week sponsored by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The lecture on the Bidwell House project will also include an exhibit of the artifacts found. The schedule for the program has yet to be announced.

The museum will kick off its 1998 season with the completion of the buildings restoration project which includes painting the museum exterior, re-glazing the windows, and replacing gutters with historically appropriate 'V'-shaped wood gutters.

Thanks to all of you who have so generously supported the restoration project for the Bidwell House. Your efforts will save this historic landmark for the education and enjoyment of future generations.

— Anita Carroil-Weldon



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## THE FAMILY NETWORK/ CHILDREN'S HEALTH, INC.

The Family Center is located at 940 South Main Street, Great Barrington; call 528-0721 for more information. All activities are at the Family Center unless otherwise noted.

We have planned several special activities for the month of April. Pre-school Options, an informative evening about area preschools, will be held April 1. A community egg hunt for children up to age six will be held on April 4 at 11 a.m. at the Bryant School playground. The event is co-sponsored the Family Network and Simon's Rock College volunteers.

A Parents Dinner Club will be

held at the Family Center on April 8 at 6 p.m. The dinner will be provided by the Marketplace of Guido's in Great Barrington.

To celebrate the week of the Young Child the Family Network will feature Roger the Jester at the Family Center on April 20 at 10:30 a.m. This event is sponsored by the Family Network and the Arts Council of Great Barrington. Also this week, on April 22, there will a storytime led by Eileen Brennan at 10:30 and each child attending will receive a free book. The event is co-sponsored by Resources for Child Care and the Family Network.

Many thanks to Maggie Sadoway for the donation of the following booklets to our lending library: Setting Limits with Children, Listening To Parents, and Supporting Adolescents.

We wish to ask your help with the parking issues at the Family Center in Great Barrington. The State Highway Department has asked that we not park on Route 7 (South Main Street). Please park carefully in the parking lot. We can use the space in the parking lot next door near the fence. Please ask staff for help if there is a problem. The advisory board has contacted the State Highway Department about lowering the speed limit on Route 7 past the Family Center and the Southern Berkshire Youth Association. Letters are at the Family Center if you wish to help us with this project.

We have begun a notebook of articles on parenting from the internet. Some of the more recent topics are: Divorce and Children, Steps for a Happy Family, Children and Pets, and Nap Time. Please ask a staff member to copy an article for you. Also advise us of specific topics in which you are interested.

From "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families" by Stephen R. Covey, habit #1: If you tend to snap and holler, criticize and berate, you probably have a malfunctioning "pause button." Covey says a "pause button" allows you to

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-- Matthew Brewer, a Roadside regular

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avoid blaming others or playing the victim by holding your response. The idea is to calm down and base your reaction on principles and values rather than on moods and conditions. For example, instead of snapping at junior for slapping his little sister, calm yourself so you can deliver an even-tempered consequence.

Some parents have asked for budgeting hints and advice. Helen Hinkley-Grady and Claudette Callahan will be available to meet with parents on April 17 at 3 p.m. Please call to make an appointment if you are interested.

The staff will be planning summer activities. Please assist by letting us know what would be most helpful to your families.

The clothing exchange is in need of clean clothes in good condition for children age birth-6 years.

Here is our calendar

**Family Center drop-in times:** Mondays noon-2 p.m.; Tuesdays and Fridays 3-5 p.m.; Wednesdays and Thursdays 10 a.m.-noon. Drop-in time for our Otis location: Thursdays 10 a.m.-noon. During drop-in times, families can use the playroom, clothing exchange and video and lending library.

**Every Monday and Friday,** Play and Learn Group for three and four year olds, registration required 9 a.m.-noon. No Meeting April, 10, 20, and 24.

**Every Monday at 7 p.m.** Fathers Group.

**Every Tuesday,** Mother-Baby Exercise Class, 8:30 a.m. Preregistration required.

**Every Tuesday,** English as a Second Language class at 9:30 a.m. Please call to preregister.

**Every Wednesday and Thursday,** Parent-Child Playgroup 9:30-11:30 a.m. Families are encouraged to attend any playgroup or more than one a week. Call for playgroup schedules in other towns. No Meetings April 22 and 23.

**Every Wednesday,** Single Mothers Support Group. Call Gail Bass, Center for Pediatric and Adolescent

Healthcare 423-528-8580.

**April 1,** Preschool Options 6:30 p.m. Come and learn about a variety of preschool programs in South Berkshire County area.

**April 1,** Breast-feeding Support Group, fourth floor, Fairview Hospital, Center for Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care 413-528-8580. 9:30 a.m.

**April 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30,** Parent to Parent Volunteer Training at the Town Hall in Otis, 9:30 a.m. Please call to register and receive more information.

**April 4,** Community Egg Hunt, Bryant School playground 11 a.m. Co-sponsored by Family Network and Simon's Rock College volunteers.

**April 7,** Support Group of Licensed Day Care Providers 7 p.m.

**April 8,** Parents Dinner Club for parents of two through six year olds, a meal will be supplied by the Marketplace at Guido's. There will be a short presentation about fostering independence. Please call to register 6 p.m.

**April 10,** Center Closed.

**April 11,** Storytime, Sandisfield Public Library and Community Center, led by Kathleen Bracken, co-sponsored by the Sandisfield Arts Council and the Family Network of Children's Health Program 10 a.m.

**April 15,** Big Brother/Big Sister, siblings of newborns preparation class

led by Mary Jane Ryba 3:30 p.m. Please call to register.

**April 17,** Plant seeds at Gould Farm, in Monterey. Each child will get to visit the greenhouse, plant some seeds to take home, and be able to see the animals. Meet at the red barns at 10:30 a.m. Wear boots.

**Week of the Young Child, April 20-24.**

**April 20,** Roger the Jester will perform at 10:30 a.m. in honor of the Week of the Young Child.

**April 22,** Storytime with Eileen Brennan, 10:30 a.m. Each child will receive a free book from Resources for Childcare in honor of the Week of the Young Child.

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*Seems the Aikens have riled  
the whole town  
building a summer cottage  
right out over the lake  
and they own two noisy outboards.  
They had seemed like nice folks  
but we can't have that!  
As if we don't have enough trouble  
keeping the water system  
going properly with no hesitations.*

*We'd best head back  
toward the village.  
Yes, we still mingle  
after Sunday service  
in the church basement,  
but it's not a very good turnout.  
Just the old faithful.  
But we have a new minister  
and high hopes.*

*Of course we recycle  
as you saw.  
A small town is good at recycling —  
we have to be!  
— but there's always the residue.*

*We are passing Mrs. Ordway's old house.  
She left her minister husband  
— poor as peeled birch trees they were —  
and ran off with a female lawyer  
who was strong-willed  
and had a good paying job.*

*The gray one is the Gregory house  
where the two brothers lived  
and one of them had a wife.  
She played the church organ  
for years, pumping away.  
Her father sang in the choir  
and with bobbing finger  
counted out the people present  
mouthing each name.*

*Now comes Alice's house.  
It's better kept, more orderly.  
She paints local scenes.  
Came from Chicago  
and Lord knows why she came here,  
but now she fits.  
Years ago we had a poet.  
Did she cause a scandal!  
She was living with a writer fellow  
— both from New York —  
but she grew up  
in this part of the state.  
Funny thing, by the time she died,  
(he'd died before her)  
she was one of the strengths of the church.*

*She started this recycling thing  
and she'd made a lot of friends.  
Short she was and around  
her ample middle  
she had a wide belt  
with handy things hanging —  
like a tin cup, keys, a metal  
milk container with a top  
and writing materials.  
She jangled as she walked!  
It didn't bother her.  
She was headed for the woods  
to pluck blueberries and inspiration, I guess.*

*My tongue's been going on too long,  
and Mabel will harry me  
for being so tardy.  
Good-bye for now, folks.  
See you at town meeting, Tuesday,  
7:30 in the library.*

— Nancy Adams  
Taken from the book of poetry, "A Peacock Feather."



## WILDLIFE SURVEY

The cold snap in mid-March, and the return of the snow, almost makes us forget all those signs of spring in late February and early March. The rain and warm weather put the brooks in spate, flooded some of the low roads, and opened up large areas of the icebound lakes. For awhile.

But the moosewood buds have put up their tall ears, the copper darts of the beech buds have lengthened, red maple and arbutus are in visible bud, and osiers and gray dogwood have red and pink twigs. And long strings of geese have been going north, two of them on February 28.

**Mountain Lion.** In the evening of February 14, Ann McGinley's Border Collie, "Abbey," raised the alarm with unusual barking so she went out with a flashlight and saw dog and lion in a stand-off, behind her house. The light made a fine reflection in the big cat's eyes when it looked around, and then left. It could easily have been the same cougar spotted by hunters on the edge of Ellen Pearson's property. Also, Nancy Kalodner reports that a bobcat was in her side field on Mount Hunger Road for the fourth time! She has photographed the cat twice wandering around her sculptures.

**Bald Eagles.** Ann saw another regal creature recently, the Tyringham eagle over the Hop Brook flats at the North end of the valley. This is very likely the same one reported in this column last month. A friend of Dale Duryea's has been seeing one in Otis. Dale thinks they may have come over

here from the considerable population at the Quabbin Reservoir.

**Minks.** Dale saw a big mink cross Route 23 at the east end of Hupi Road in the end of February. He parked his truck and watched as the mink investigated the tumbled down house there. It was sniffing around everywhere as though hunting mice or chipmunks; it took its time, ignoring the watcher in the truck for about fifteen minutes.

Ann found a mink dead in the Sandisfield Road just about where you turn off to go to Keswick. That was two months ago, but recently she and a friend thought they saw a mink go into a culvert under Route 8 near its intersection with Route 20. They stopped, looked and found themselves face to face with a fisher! It slipped into the creek, came up on the farther bank and was clearly visible against the snow in the woods beyond for several, long exciting moments.

She heard several coyotes, concertizing at the end of her driveway in the first week of March; Dale reports coyotes "for the last month and a half, wandering in and out."

**Deer in town.** After the town meeting, the evening of Feb. 27, several cars going east on Main Road had to stop near the old fire house for a small caucus of deer in the middle of the road. Three adults and a half-grown fawn stood around uncertainly for awhile and then leapt away, up the hill.

**Birds.** David and Beryl McAllester saw a dozen mergansers in the water north of the bridge at the bottom of Stonybrook

Road, March 8. There was much splashing about in what appeared to be courtship behavior by a number of males vying for the attention of one or two females. Bonner and Sudi and Cora saw them a few days later at the same place.

Eleanor Kimberley heard of a good-sized flock of robins on Blue Hill Road, the last week of February; the elder McAllesters saw a pair there March 14. Eleanor heard blackbirds February 25 and saw three chipmunks (almost birds, the way they whisk about) on Town Hill Road, March 7. Pat Holahan on Main Road, has seen bluebirds all winter, she told Eleanor. Eileen Lawler spotted two grosbeaks on Hupi Road, March 7, and Mary Brock reported the loss of two grosbeaks to the sharpshinned hawk that also visits her feeder, on Mount Hunger Road. She has also seen a brown creeper, a red bellied woodpecker, and the first fox sparrow. The Tryons at Lowland Farm have seen fox sparrows, coming through, the second week of March, and they have heard that Rod Palmer has seen a female bluebird, twice. Susan Sellev saw her first woodcock of the spring on March 8 at Rawson Brook Farm. Ann McGinley saw a red tailed hawk fly over Route 23 near Great Barrington on March 12, carrying a mouse in its beak.

**Bear Tracks.** In Otis and on a lawn in Housatonic are reported by Dale. The second bear was also seen and the tracks measured: it seems to have been a yearling of about 100 pounds. Not only bears, but also chipmunk and skunks were lured out of hibernation by the warm spell. One of the latter was killed by traffic on Blue Hill Road about March 5, and Dale has had several calls to move skunks away from residences.

**Squirrels.** Dale remarks on a relative scarcity of squirrels at this time and other observers agree. Eleanor saw a red squirrel on February 25. I did see a gray and a red, at the same time, busy among fallen acorns back of my house, February 28. The leaping grace of the former made a striking contrast with the zipping, zig-zag speed of the latter.

**Moth.** A large moth was fluttering at my kitchen window the evening of March 12.

— David P. McAllester



### MONTEREY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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For Information and Assistance:

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MaryKate Jordan

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## COCO OF RIO BOBOS

I am an unabashed animal lover; there is not one species I can think of that I don't love. Sometimes when I am talking to a group of kids I hear myself asking them, "What's your favorite animal?" and then they have to think it over, raise their hands and start talking about animals. This is all I am after, I just want us to be talking about animals. I should be the last person to make anybody declare a favorite, and I don't know why I ever do this except that people used to ask me the same question.

Throughout most of my childhood, that part of it which is past anyway, I would always say horses were my favorites, but as the words popped out I would be thinking to myself, "It's not true! I love cats the most— especially mountain lions—" and then more thoughts would crowd around, a Peaceable Kingdom of favorites who would not be denied: red squirrels, dolphins, blue jays, caddis flies, nudibranchs, garter snakes. The truth is, when it comes to animals, I am completely greedy. I want them all, and this includes the ones I have never even seen but only read about.

When I was in high school I fell in love, thanks to the writing of Gavin Maxwell, with river otters. I bought his book "Ring of Bright Water," at a book fair in the school library and my life-long desperate need to have a horse was for a time enlarged to include an otter. Our family had a home-made cement swimming pool which I thought could be turned into a home for an otter. I pictured myself getting home from school, throwing down my books, hauling on my jeans, and rushing down to the pool to talk to the otter. His head would pop up, periscope in my direction, and then down he would go to torpedo through the water like a

silver streak and come sledding on his belly along the concrete to stop at my feet, muttering and snuffling. He would be in my arms in a second, soaking wet, telling jokes and chuckling.

All this detail I got just from reading Gavin Maxwell. I had never even seen an otter and my family nixed the idea of keeping one in the swimming pool— fortunately! I have learned since that a typical male otter has a home range of sixty square miles and commonly travels nine miles in a winter's night. In the



decades that followed there were to be many more horses than otters in my immediate life, but it turns out my teenaged love affair with otters never ended, never really gave way. Last month I met Coco, on Rio Bobos, in the state of Veracruz, Mexico.

We were riding in the back of a pick-up truck on our way to a river trip. It was slowly dawning on me that this was not to be the sort of trip where I lay about drawing with my new pencils, looking up Spanish words in the dictionary, possibly working on my suntan. My Spanish is such that the whole trip was full of delightful surprises and titillating uncertainties. Our guide, Ali Gonzales, was telling us as we bumped along in the truck, that soon we would be able to see an animal. He said it would be "una nutria— un perro de agua..." My Spanish was up to this! A nutria, I knew, was a muskratty sort of thing, possible even guinea pigish. But a "dog of the water"?

When I thought "nutria," my mind went to Argentina and "coypu" but not especially to dogs and water. Maybe this was just Ali trying every way he could to tell us we were going to see, let's say, a coatinundi— or a wild pig. Whatever it was, I was ready.

I was not ready! We got out of the truck and a man came from a small cafe and house carrying an animal. The next thing I knew, he was in my arms telling jokes and chuckling. His name was Coco and he was a half-grown river otter, just like my true love from high school. He

rolled and snuggled, nuzzling into my elbow. He was like a kid in a sleeping bag, horsing around, only the sleeping bag was his own short dense coat.

I held his webbed hind foot and it was as soft and delicate and warm as Cora's cheek when I kiss her good-night. His foot was impossibly sensitive, for a foot. I was so moved by this I didn't know what to say, but he put me right at my ease with another of his jokes. It went like

this: "Ur...ur...urrrr (snuffle!) Mm, mm, ur...ur...ur...urrrrr!" and as I stroked his head he suddenly rolled over in one liquid turn and ever so gently took my hand in his mouth. Coco held my hand, explored my fingers, flattered me with his attentions and good manners.

In the end I had to give him back and go rafting. Our "balsa" (raft) went swirling around the great rocks of Rio Bobos (River of Clowns) and once Ali pointed to a flat rock saying, "nutria, nutria." I feel pretty sure he was saying this was a place where otters had been or maybe where he had seen otters. Maybe, like me on a nature hike with a bunch of kids, he was saying, "You say the otter is your favorite animal? Well this place right here is a typical place where an otter might sit, eating crayfish or maybe a big trout, or just chuckling in the sun as the Rio Bobos goes by full of animal lovers."

— Bonner McAllester



## SENATOR SAYS

**Don't Take Small Towns for Granted!** A number of small towns in this part of the state have turned to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program when major capital projects are needed. CDBG funds come from federal allocations to the states. Within a certain framework, each state can decide how to distribute its share of funds for projects and programs to support economic development, housing rehabilitation, downtown revitalization, social programs and similar public purposes.

I am pleased that communities in this area have benefited from CDBG during my first term as your State Senator. The Town of Otis is drawing on \$1.2 million for a sewer system for the town center. Middlefield received a grant award of \$1.8 million for road reconstruction, housing rehabilitation and disabled access to the Town Hall. Charlemont, Monroe, Heath, Cummington, Plainfield, Adams and Chester also landed grants this year (over \$3.2 million altogether). Access to this kind of state assistance is vital when a small town finds that it must undertake a big project.

Most of the large cities in Massachusetts receive "Entitlement" funds which are reserved for them under federal rules. Massachusetts has created an additional category of "Mini-Entitlements" for small cities. Smaller towns do not automatically receive entitlements, and may seek CDBG grant support through a competitive "Community Development Fund" category of CDBG funds.

This year, agencies and officials in Pioneer Valley, the Franklin region and the

**Peter S. Vallianos**  
Attorney at Law  
528-0055

General practice includes real estate purchases, sales, family transfers, and transfers in trust, zoning, land use matters, conservation restrictions landlord-tenant; wills, probate; commercial law.

\*\*\*

I will meet with you at your home in Monterey.

Berkshires have indicated to me that some proposed changes in grant rules and procedures could significantly reduce access to these grants for small towns. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) proposal would reduce the amount available to the Community Development Fund, and increase the fund reserved for sixteen entitlement communities in the state. I have written to DHCD to express concern about these proposed changes in the allocation of these funds, and will continue to work with my colleagues in the Small Town and Rural Caucus to ensure that a fair share of this grant money remains available to smaller municipalities.

**Damming Evidence.** On March 2, the Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee held an oversight hearing concerning the effect of the 1996 ballot Question 1, which banned certain body-gripping animal traps. The Committee was responding to an increasing number of complaints about the beaver population in the Commonwealth. At the hearing, representatives of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife testified that the beaver population has almost doubled since the passage of Question 1, and expressed concerns about the effectiveness of the remaining traps to control the population. Local officials at the hearing detailed incidents of flooding and property damage which have resulted from the increasing number of beaver dams. The Committee will be examining this issue,

and may propose solutions consistent with Question 1. I would like to hear from you about beavers in your community, and will pass your comments along to my colleagues on the Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee.

**Cellular Towers Update.** Many citizens and local officials have contacted me about the January 1998 decision by the state's Department of Telecommunications and Energy (DTE) which would allow proponents of certain telecommunications towers to appeal to the DTE for permits to erect these structures. I support a legislative approach which would negate the DTE decision, and voted in favor of such legislation in the Senate on February 26. The House of Representatives has adopted a different approach to this issue, proposing creation of a five-member panel to advise the DTE on appeals of tower permits. It remains to be seen how the two approaches to this issue will be reconciled by the legislature. I will work for a quick response which will bolster local regulatory authority, and ensure that tower proponents will negotiate in good faith with local permitting boards. In the meantime, I urge local officials and town meetings to put in place strong local bylaws which spell out your expectations for applicants who wish to erect telecommunications towers in your community. Contact my district office at (413) 442-6810 if you would like more information.

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## REP RAP

One of my primary concerns as a State Representative has always been the condition of our health care system and patient rights. I am one of the initial supporters of single payer health care and I am signed on to the upcoming managed care reform bill currently before the house. I have been strongly supportive of local efforts to maintain a high standard of health care in the Southern Berkshires, especially in the last couple of years with issues threatening the future of Fairview Hospital.

As you know, Fairview is one of the smallest hospitals in Massachusetts. Second only to a facility on Martha's Vineyard. Despite its relatively small size, Fairview provides vital medical services to our community. Without it, we would need to travel almost an hour to receive emergency care. We would need to go to BMC for everything from routine lab tests to sophisticated therapy. Luckily, Berkshire Health Systems (BHS), Fairview's parent corporation, respects Fairview's unique position and supports the hospital despite less than stellar financial performance.

However, there are external threats to Fairview's survival. Namely, Berkshire Physicians & Surgeons, PC (BP&S). As I am sure you have heard over the last year, I am leading a group of concerned citizens opposing BP&S's plans to build a new office building off Fairview's campus. They are moving forward with their plans despite Fairview's offer to provide a new facility for them right next to the hospital. If BP&S succeeds in its plans to relocate to a South Main Street property, it will be in direct

competition with Fairview for ancillary services.

BP&S claims that it will not be including laboratory space in their new building, but the plans call for rooms with lead lined walls. So their intent to offer these services in the future is evident. Fairview's budget relies on income from those ancillary services in order to survive. BP&S's actions could deprive the hospital of much needed income. BHS might have no choice but to cut back on hospital services in the Southern Berkshires if BP&S is allowed to continue.

BP&S has repeatedly asserted that it will not compete with Fairview. However, we recently learned that BP&S is courting a doctor's group based in Atlanta, Georgia. This group, MedPartners, is a national profit-driven corporation. If this sale takes place, all decisions regarding BP&S would be made in Atlanta. You can be sure that any consideration of our community's well-being and the well-being of Fairview Hospital will be over-shadowed by the profit margin. The bottom line will be the only concern of the corporation. Any promises or considerations made by BP&S today will be moot.

This move toward the bottom line and away from patient care was made evident last month when BP&S abruptly fired Dr. Edward Weiner. Not only did they retain all of Dr. Weiner's patient records, they changed the locks on his office door. But the most insulting action taken by BP&S in this fiasco was the letters that were sent to his patients telling them that he was no longer with BP&S. Suddenly, his 2,000 patients thought he had left the practice and

would no longer treat them. As I am sure you are aware, that was not the case.

On March 4, 1998, I wrote to the Attorney General and the Board of Registration in Medicine regarding the handling of Dr. Weiner's termination and more importantly the mishandling of his patients.

My office has been deluged with calls from people who were offended by BP&S's lack of consideration of the patients affected by their actions. One would expect patient concerns to be of the highest priority, but apparently not in this case. What was more alarming was that the patients were misled by BP&S in an effort to keep them under the BP&S corporate umbrella. Not only was it unethical for BP&S to actively solicit Dr. Weiner's patients, but it certainly seemed that their actions were potentially fraudulent and therefore illegal.

I take great umbrage that BP&S interfered with the sacred patient-doctor relationship. Patients are not treated by the corporation. It is not a patient-corporate relationship. If that were the case, we would require medical administrators to take the Hippocratic oath. (Maybe that's not a bad idea!)

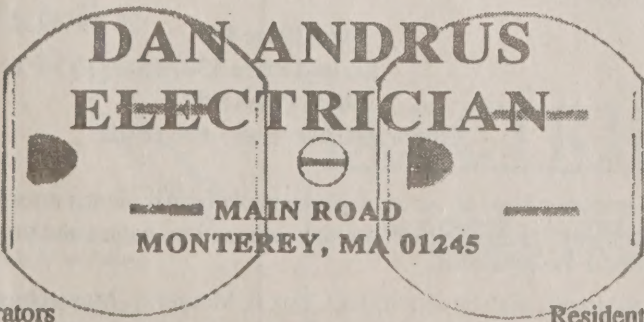
I will continue to fight for the rights of Southern Berkshire County. Fairview Hospital must survive and patients must be guaranteed high quality and affordable health care. That is why I oppose any efforts that threaten the livelihood of Fairview Hospital and why I support managed care reform.

Rep. Christopher J. Hodgkins

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*Storrs Olds weilds a chain saw for trail blazing on Mount Hunger.*

## PERSONAL NOTES

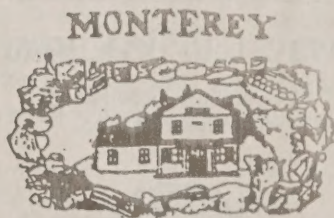
Welcome back to Lincoln Lipsky who spent two weeks in Lyon, France, on a student exchange trip with classmates from Berkshire Country Day School. In the course of the trip the students attended class with their French counterparts, took a sightseeing trip to Paris, went skiing in the Alps, practiced their French, and generally had a wonderful time.

On April 2, Abby Childs, Maggie Clawson, Deidre Higgins and the rest of the Berkshire Children's Chorus will sing at Berkshire Health System's Music and Healing conference at the Thornewood Inn. The chorus will sing many of the pieces they will perform at the Tuscany International Children's Chorus Festival, which is only three months away.

Happy birthday this month to Maynard Forbes, and Wendy Tryon on April 2, to Eric Pedersen and Karl Quisenberry on April 4, to Bonnie Cox on April 8, to Andrew Doherty on April 16, to Don Coburn and Lily Chapman on April 18, to Maggie Leonard on April 21, to Cody Funk on April 24, and to Grace Burke on April 28.

We enjoy hearing your news and passing on birthday and anniversary greetings. If you have any you would like to share, please drop me a line at P.O. Box 351, Monterey, MA 01245, or give me a call at 528-6691, if possible, before the twelfth of each month. Thank you so much.

— Ann Higgins



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**Second Prize \$30**

**Third Prize \$20**

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The contest is open to all amateur photographers. All photos must be taken in Monterey. Categories are: architecture, action, nature and portraits.

Photographs may be sent to P.O. Box 9, Monterey, Massachusetts, 01245  
Deadline for submissions is April 30, 1998.



## CALENDAR

**Sundays**, AA meetings, 9 a.m., in the Monterey Firehouse, Main Road.

**Saturday, April 11**, The Bidwell House archeological dig 10-10:45 a.m. A lecture and demonstration by Joyce Clemens on the techniques for plotting, digging, retrieving, and recording artifacts found on site. Admission: \$2 for adults, \$1 for children. Location is 100 Art School Road, Monterey. Call 528-6888 for information and rain date.

**Friday, April 17**, Family Network program at Gould Farm, 10:30 a.m. Children are invited to plant seeds to take home, and see farm animals. Meet at the red barns and wear boots.

**Saturday, April 18**, Rabies clinic, 1-2:30 p.m., Monterey Firehouse, Main Road.

**Monday, April 20**, 10 a.m.-noon, South County La Leche League meets at the Guthrie Center, Great Barrington. Free advice and support for breast-feeding. For questions and directions call Maureen at 528-6619

**Friday, April 24**, Spring luncheon at noon in the basement of the Town Hall sponsored by the Monterey Council on Aging.

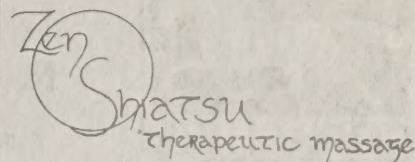
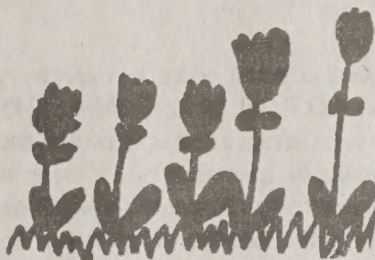
**Saturday, April 25**, Square and contradancing at the Sheffield Grange, Route 7, Sheffield, Mass. Music by Mountain Laurel, calling by Joe Baker. All dances are taught and beginners and children are welcome. Refreshments served.

**Thursday, April 30**, deadline for the 1998 McLaughlin-Wilson Scholarship applications.

## THE OBSERVER

**February 25 - March 25**

High temp. (3/26) .....55.9°  
 Low temp. (3/13) .....3.7°  
 Wind-chilled low temp (3/11) .....-29.2°  
 Avg. high temp. ....40.9°  
 Avg. low temp. ....22.8°  
 Rain and melted snowfall .....3.69"  
 Snowfall .....11"  
 High bar. press. (3/17) .....30.47"  
 Low bar. press. (3/10) .....29.23"  
 High wind gust (3/12) .....36 mph.



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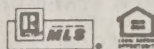
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*News* by mail (free!) to Barbara Tryon, Business Manager. We will typeset a text-only ad for your Monterey-based business, service, or event, or advertisers may submit an ad with graphics on a Macintosh formatted disk. Address your request for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone her in Monterey at 413-528-1170.

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*Contributions from local artists this month: Bonner McAllester, p.15.*

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